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## Viewing cable 08PORTAUPRINCE1381, WHY WE NEED CONTINUING MINUSTAH PRESENCE IN HAITI

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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**#08PORTAUPRINCE1381.**

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">08PORTAUPRINCE1381</a>	<a href="#">2008-10-01 15:48</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Port Au Prince</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.haiti-liberte.com/archives/volume5-4/U.S.%20and%20UN%20Supervised.asp>  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PORT AU PRINCE 001381

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: WHY WE NEED CONTINUING MINUSTAH PRESENCE IN HAITI

PORT AU PR 00001381 001.2 OF 004

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson. Reason: E.O. 12958 1.4  
(b), (d)

[¶1.](#) (U) This report responds to recommendation number 2 of the Embassy Port au Prince OIG inspection report.

Summary  
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[¶2.](#) (C) The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti is an indispensable tool in realizing core USG policy interests in Haiti. Security vulnerabilities and fundamental institutional weaknesses mean that Haiti will require a continuing - albeit eventually shrinking - MINUSTAH presence for at least three and more likely five years. Haiti needs the UN presence to fill the security gap caused by Haiti's fledgling police force's lack of numbers and capabilities. It needs MINUSTAH to partner with the USG and other donors in institution-building. A premature departure of MINUSTAH would leave the Preval government or his successor vulnerable to resurgent kidnapping and international drug trafficking, revived gangs, greater political violence, an exodus of seaborne migrants, a sharp drop in foreign and domestic investment, and resurgent populist and anti-market economy political forces - reversing gains of the last two years.

[¶3.](#) (C) Summary Continued: MINUSTAH is a remarkable product and symbol of hemispheric cooperation in a country with little going for it. There is no feasible substitute for this UN presence. It is a financial and regional security bargain for the USG. USG civilian and military assistance under current domestic and international conditions, alone or in combination with our closest partners, could never fill the gap left by a premature MINUSTAH pullout. The U.S. will reap benefits from this hemispheric security cooperation for years to come - but only if its success is not endangered by early withdrawal. We must work to preserve MINUSTAH by continuing to partner with it at all levels in coordination with other major donor and MINUSTAH contributor countries from the hemisphere. That partnering will also help counter perceptions in Latin contributing countries that Haitians see their presence in Haiti as unwanted. The Department and Embassies in Latin countries contributing troops should work to ensure these countries' continuing support for MINUSTAH. End summary.

Haiti Needs MINUSTAH to Become Viable State  
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[¶4.](#) (C) The fundamental USG policy goal in Haiti is to make it a viable state that does not pose a threat to the region through domestic political turmoil or an exodus of illegal migrants. To reach that point, Haiti must be able to assure its own domestic security, govern itself with stable democratic institutions, and create a business climate that will get the economy moving. Haiti has made progress but is still a long way from these goals. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) is the largest and most effective external institution pursuing them. Haiti's progress toward viability hinges on a large international security presence and continued injections of assistance to consolidate its institutions and ease human misery. MINUSTAH is the implementing instrument of the security goal, and MINUSTAH elements are key players in the goal of

consolidating institutions and providing critical disaster relief.

#### MINUSTAH a Security Linchpin

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15. (C) MINUSTAH's core stabilization function is security: filling the gap left by inadequate force levels and capabilities of the Haitian National Police (HNP). The HNP currently has approximately 9,000 officers. MINUSTAH in 2006 set a five-year target of training and fielding 14,000 officers - although the police reform report to the UN Security Council says 20,000 are needed to adequately police the country. At current training and vetting rates, Haiti

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will reach this goal by 2012 at the earliest, provided the GOH is willing to fund and staff this level. (Note: This projection rests on HNP plans to expand the capacity of the Police Academy beginning with the summer class of 2008. End note.) This gain in force will be reduced if the HNP acts on the results of the ongoing UN vetting process and weeds out officers found to be linked to crime, corruption, and other misconduct. Normal attrition will also push the 2012 target date further out. Deficient capabilities - in experience, investigative skills, and management, all exacerbated by corruption -- limit the HNP's security clout.

16. (C) Given HNP's lack of capability, MINUSTAH's backup security and police training functions are needed to fill the resulting gap in security. MINUSTAH troops continue to provide security in areas such as the Cite Soleil slum, liberated from overt gang rule in early 2007. They are also the country's ultimate riot control force which in times of unrest protects strategic government installations, including the National Palace and the airport. In MINUSTAH's UN police operations pillar, Formed Police Units (FPU - gendarmerie-type police units from individual contributor countries) aid the HNP with security operations, such as helping put down the mutiny at the national penitentiary last November, and performing riot control during the April disturbances. UNPOL officers provide support to HNP operations, down to helping the anti-kidnapping unit and beginning to assist the HNP's counter narcotics unit. The UNPOL development pillar works with the HNP to develop its capabilities. UNPOL officers guide and monitor the training of the HNP at the Police Academy and in the field. The MINUSTAH apparatus is also conducting the vetting of the entire HNP, an essential aspect of HNP reform.

17. (C) The April food riots threw into stark relief MINUSTAH's role as a security force of last resort. MINUSTAH troops, FPU's and UNPOL provided the critical extra security capability that prevented riots from overrunning the Presidential Palace and probably chasing President Preval from office.

#### MINUSTAH Role in Institution Building

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18. (C) MINUSTAH contributes to building up Haiti's political and judicial institutions and supporting them day-to-day on the ground. It has a civilian presence throughout the country: its civil affairs division has teams of advisers deployed in larger towns in all ten departments. These units advise and train officials at a level of government that is just getting off the ground. At the national level, MINUSTAH is a key partner of the U.S. and other donor countries in building up and reforming Haiti's judicial system. The dimensions of the UN's civilian technical assistance and training for Haiti's national and local institutions exceed that of all other diplomatic missions in Haiti put together.

#### MINUSTAH Post-Hurricane Role

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¶9. (C) The August-September series of hurricanes and floods have put MINUSTAH's disaster relief role in the spotlight. Cut roads and fallen bridges meant that Prime Minister Michele Pierre-Louis' visits to flooded regions were possible only in MINUSTAH helicopters. Their rotary wing aircraft have also flown emergency aid to areas cut off from ground transport, supplementing the air assets of the USS Kearsarge and the World Food Program. MINUSTAH troops rescued flood victims trapped in their homes, and continue to provide security for food convoys and distribution points, assuring that emergency aid commodities reach their destination and are distributed in an orderly manner. MINUSTAH serves as the coordinating body among donors and between donors and the Government of Haiti.

#### Bottom Line on Continuing MINUSTAH Presence

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¶10. (C) The U.S. has a strong interest in maintaining MINUSTAH's presence in Haiti until Haiti's security, judicial and political institutions are can maintain a minimal level of domestic security and political stability on their own. Embassy therefore believes that MINUSTAH's presence here is needed until the HNP reaches at least 14,000 officers and Haiti has installed a new President after the 2011 Presidential transition. A UN civilian advisory presence will be needed for an additional period after the MINUSTAH military and police are drawn down to help along Haiti's institution-building. MINUSTAH already envisions gradually transitioning the current force structure from predominantly infantry to more military police and engineering units, provided the UNSC agrees. It will reduce its civilian presence as Haiti's institutions become more solid. However, a significant withdrawal of the MINUSTAH security forces and civilian advisers is not advisable for a minimum of three years, and we believe that a full withdrawal of MINUSTAH should not be considered before five years.

#### Scenario of a Premature MINUSTAH Departure

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¶11. (C) A precipitous withdrawal of or premature drawdown of MINUSTAH's security component could open the door to elements that threaten Haiti's political stability and the consolidation of its democratic institutions. These are goals which we and our hemispheric and European allies since 2004 have devoted over two billion USD in resources to achieve. Increased security and other assistance from the U.S. and other large donors individually could not immediately make up for the loss of MINUSTAH boots on the ground.

¶12. (C) We could see a rollback of stabilization and security gains made since MINUSTAH began to serious confront security problems in 2006. Kidnappings, now reduced through effective police work, might spike upward again. Drug trafficking networks, a large threat even with the current MINUSTAH presence, could ramp up shipments through Haiti and further their penetration of police, the judiciary, parliament -- where we estimate perhaps a score of deputies and senators are linked to the drug trade. Gang structures, weakened but not eliminated from Port-au-Prince, Cap Haitien and Gonaives, could flex their muscles again. If gangs resurface, we could see the revival of politically-linked armed groups that during the Aristide era engaged in targeted violence including murder against regime critics. If these factors produced greater general instability, larger numbers of Haitians would likely to take to the boats and attempt to reach the U.S., as they did in the unstable 1990s. An upward trend of the above factors would cause a deterioration of the economic environment and a drop in domestic and foreign investment.

## MINUSTAH a Good Deal for the U.S.

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¶13. (C) MINUSTAH's presence produces real regional security dividends for the U.S. Paying one-quarter of MINUSTAH's budget through our DPKO assessment, the U.S. reaps the security and stabilization benefits of a 9,000-person international military and civilian stabilization mission in the hemisphere's most troubled country. The security dividend the U.S. reaps from this hemispheric cooperation not only benefits the immediate Caribbean, but also is developing habits of security cooperation in the hemisphere that will serve our interests for years to come. In the current context of our military commitments elsewhere, the U.S. alone could not replace this mission. This regionally-coordinated Latin American commitment to Haiti would not be possible without the UN umbrella. That same umbrella helps other major donors -- led by Canada and followed up by the EU, France, Spain, Japan and others -- justify their bilateral assistance domestically. Without a UN-sanctioned peacekeeping and stabilization force, we

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would be getting far less help from our hemispheric and European partners in managing Haiti.

But We Must Short Up Support

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¶14. (C) The U.S. will continue to reap these security benefits only if MINUSTAH's mission succeeds and enables Haiti to carry itself as a country. The USG thus has a strong interest that contributing countries continue their commitment until Haiti's stability is self-sustained. The USG should work to shore up support for MINUSTAH in Haiti and in hemispheric troop-contributing countries. We should take emphasis in UN venues and bilaterally to our Latin partners that the Haitian people and their legitimate government support MINUSTAH's presence, and that the UN is here at the express request of the Government of Haiti. We must be sensitive to Latin fears that any Haitian opposition to the UN presence undermines their domestic support for deployments in Haiti. During the April riots, the Brazilian MINUSTAH Force Commander told Ambassador and others that his greatest fear was that his troops would be forced to fire on demonstrators. He understood that this could ignite opposition in Haiti, Brazil, and other contributing countries to his troops' presence in Haiti. The Brazilian Embassy's national day celebration in Port au Prince September 8 was an exercise aimed at the Brazilian domestic audience. Attended by several Brazilian senators, it featured slide paelts extolling the humanitarian work of Brazil's army at home and in Haiti, and a pathos-filled speech by the Ambassador about the history and culture Brazil shares with Haiti.

¶15. (C) The Port au Prince embassies of Latin countries contributing to MINUSTAH look to the strength of the U.S. commitment to the UN presence as a bellwether. Any slippage of U.S. commitment would embolden domestic elements who oppose these countries' participation in in the UN mission here. We sense that the strong U.S. embrace of the UN presence in Haiti helps their case at home for continuing deployments in Haiti. The Embassy uses every opportunity to partner publicly with and support MINUSTAH. The current post-hurricane relief effort, however disordered, is proving an opportunity for U.S., Canadian, and other bilateral donors to partner with MINUSTAH in disaster assistance and reconstruction. We sense that the humanitarian focus of these crisis-response efforts -- in contrast to riot-control efforts in April -- is helping the case in Latin countries for continuing their peacekeeping contributions in Haiti.

¶16. (C) The USG in Washington, New York, and in Latin capitals must also do their part to buck up support for MINUSTAH. In UN Security Council discussions of

Haiti-related items, U.S. rhetorical appreciation for the UN presence here helps reassure contributor countries that their deployments are justified. Similar expressions of support to Latin representatives in Washington and Latin capitals are also helpful.

¶17. (C) In the end, what will maintain MINISTAH participants' support for deployments in Haiti is progress toward Haitian stabilization and state viability. Continuing the UN presence at projected levels for three to five years will not guarantee that result, but abruptly downsizing or prematurely withdrawing it will make more likely a result in Haiti we do not want, and would make future hemispheric peacekeeping efforts more difficult to justify.  
SANDERSON